The Bishop of *Norwich's*

FAST-SERMON,

January 30. 1679.

(Price Four-Pence.)

Die Martis 1°. Februarij, 1725

ORdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of NORWICH, for the Sermon by him preach'd before this House Yesterday, in the *Abby-Church, Westminster*; and He is hereby desired to cause the same to be Printed and Published.

W. COWPER,
Cler' Parliamentor'

A SERMON

Preach'd before the

LORDS Spiritual and Temporal

In PARLIAMENT Assembled,

AT THE

Collegiate-Church of St. PETER,
WESTMINSTER,

On *Monday*, *January* the 31st 1725.

Being the Anniversary Fast for the *Martyrdom* of King *CHARLES* the First.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

JOHN Lord Bishop of NORWICH.

LONDON:

Printed for R. KNAPLOCK, at the *Bishop's Head* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. MDCCXXVI.

St. JAMES IV. 1.

From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, which war in your members?

THE Occasion of this Day's Humiliation is a Matter so well known to all the People of this Kingdom, that it would be a very improper mis-spending the Time in this Place, to give an historical Account of it. For if a melancholy Relation of that barbarous Murder, as on this Day committed upon the Sacred Person of the King; or a tragical declaiming against the Villany and Cruelty of those who committed it, and who have long since received the just Reward of their Deeds; or if the angry Expressions of a bitter Zeal of one Party against another, each endeavouring to justify themselves, and condemn others for all the Evils that attended it, were the only proper or natural Exercise of our publick Humiliation; it were much better to spend the Time in a private and silent Retirement: lest by enflaming our Passions we should be tempted to use *any Names*

or Words of Reproach, or Terms of Distinction, whereby the Memory of those Differences might be revived, which were by Law intended to be *put into utter Oblivion.*

But there is no Necessity to make this Use of this publick and solemn Fast; for there are Two very distinct Views in which the Fact we this Day lament may be considered, neither of which can justly encourage us to fast for Strife and Debate, but the quite contrary: One, as an Act of consummate Wickedness committed by a Party of wretched Men harden'd in their Impiety; the other, as an heavy Judgment inflicted upon the Nation for the manifold Sins and Wickedness of all Orders and Degrees of Men in it.

In the first of these Views, the Law * which enjoins this Anniversary Day of Fasting and Humiliation, had Reason to declare it to have been *the Rage of a few Miscreants, which stood imputed by our Adversaries to the whole Nation*; and describes them † to have been such, as *found it necessary, in order to carry on their pernicious and traiterous Designs, to throw down all the Bulwarks and Fences of Law, and to subvert the very Being and Constitution of Parliament; which they did by seducing some Part of the then Army into a Compliance, till they had fully strengthened themselves in Power and Faction*; so as to seize the Person of the King during a Treaty of Peace; to seize upon the House of Commons, when they had voted

* 13. Car. II. cap. 11. † 12. Car. II. cap. 30.

the

the King's Concessions a Ground for Peace; seducing and imprisoning some Members, and turning out others, till a small Remnant, and those their own Creatures, not a tenth Part of the whole, prepared an Ordinance for erecting a new and monstrous Tribunal, which was totally rejected by the Peers: yet by this Handful of Men, possess'd of the Sword, under the falsly assumed Name of the *Commons of England, pass'd as a Law, by a Power of their own making*; the dismal Effect of which, all the free People of *England* did then abominate; and when the Yoke, which then lay upon them, was removed, did in the most publick and effectual Manner express their utter Detestation of it.

As an Act of Guilt therefore in this View, we ought not rashly to charge it upon those, who at the Time abhorred it, much less upon their innocent Posterity; nor any others of the present Generation, unless any are so wicked as to make themselves Parties to it by justifying the Fact: Which I hope very few, if any, are so desperately abandoned to all Sense of Shame as to attempt, after the Sense of the whole Nation has been so long, and so solemnly declared against it.

But then if we consider it in the other View, as a Judgment of God inflicted upon the whole Nation for the manifold Sins and Wickedness of all Orders and Degrees of Men in it, and intended by the Discipline of Providence, as a Means to make all Parties wiser

and

and better for the future: The same Law hath likewise told us the End and Design of our Fasting and Humiliation, which is *to implore the Mercy of God, that neither the Guilt of that Sacred and Innocent Blood, nor those other Sins by which God was provoked to deliver up both us and our King into the Hands of cruel and unreasonable Men, may at any time hereafter be visited upon us, or our Posterity.* This Mercy of God we have now been imploring, with an humble and (I hope) sincere Confession, *in behalf of all the People of this Land, that they were the crying Sins of this Nation, which brought down this heavy Judgment upon us.* And the way to make this our Confession and Humiliation effectual, to the preventing of any such dismal Calamity from befalling us for the future, is for every Man conscientiously to examine his own Conduct, and to correct and subdue all such vitious Inclinations and Passions in himself, as may any way tend to publick Disorder, either by their own natural Consequences, or by engaging him in any sinful Course, which becoming epidemical through the Encouragement and Example which wicked Men give one another, may justly draw down the Judgments of God upon the Publick.

Upon which Account, I have chosen these words of St. *James* for the Subject of our present Meditation: Which have a reference to what went before, in the latter part of the

the preceding Chapter, concerning two opposite Kinds of Wisdom, and the Fruits or Effects of each, in the good or ill governing both of our Words and Actions, from whence good or ill Consequences to Society do naturally flow. *He that is a wise man, and endued with knowledge*, must, *out of a good conversation, shew his works with meekness of wisdom*, or a discreet Gentleness. *But if ye have bitter* Zeal, or *envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lye not against the truth.* Such *wisdom cometh not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish*: This is such a false Wisdom, as is not fit to be boasted of. *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.* But the true *wisdom which is from above, is first pure*, and free from every corrupt Passion or Design; *then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated*, or reconciled, *full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.* This is a Description of those good Dispositions in the Mind of truly wise and virtuous Men, which are the Foundation of Peace and good Order in that Society where they prevail: For *the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace.* And then the Text gives us an account from whence the contrary Evils, which are some of the greatest Miseries of Human Society, proceed. *From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts which war in your members?*

The Words being expreſs'd by way of Interrogation, are a kind of Appeal to every conſiderate Man's own Reflection and Experience, concerning the Truth of the Aſſertion imply'd in them; and they want no Explication, to unfold the Meaning of them. Neither is it at preſent of any great moment to enquire, whether the Apoſtle had any particular Caſe of War and Confuſion among thoſe to whom he writes, then in view: For the Nature of the Caſe is not peculiar to that, or any other Time of inteſtine Wars or Fightings; which always proceed originally from the ſame inward Cauſes, though the outward Occaſions or Pretences of quarrelling may be very different. I mention inteſtine Wars, becauſe both the Subject which introduces the Text, and the Manner in which the Text it ſelf is expreſs'd, ſeem chiefly to relate to ſuch Feuds and Diſturbances, as ariſe among thoſe of the ſame Community. From whence I ſhall take occaſion to make the following Obſervations.

I. That the Apoſtle here expreſſes the greateſt Evils, which Men ſuffer from one another in Society, by *wars and fightings among themſelves.*

II. That how great ſoever theſe Evils be, they naturally proceed from the ungoverned Luſts and Paſſions of Men. And therefore,

III. That

III. That the true Foundation of all publick Happiness and Tranquillity, is most surely laid in every Man's curbing his own unruly Lusts and Passions.

I. That the Apostle here expresses the greatest Evils, which Men suffer from one another, in Society, by Wars and Fightings among themselves; that is, by civil Discord and Dissension wrought up to its highest Pitch, and so breaking out into Acts of determined Rage and Cruelty. And as it is usual, both in Holy Scripture and other Writings, to express the greatest Blessings and Comforts of Civil Society by the Name of Peace; so no doubt the greatest Evils and Mischiefs which Men bring upon each other, either in their natural or political Capacity, may be very fitly express'd by the opposite Term. I do not here intend to enter into a Representation of all the Miseries and Calamities which attend a Civil War, with respect either to Mens Persons or Possessions; what Havock it makes both of the Lives and Estates of innocent, and otherwise peaceable Persons, where it rages; what Ruin it brings upon Families, and what Marks of Desolation it often leaves upon the very Face of a Country. These are indeed dismal Effects, and such our own Country felt in that Time of Confusion, which brought on this fatal Day; and which ought to make us cautious of ever engaging in any such Measures

for the future, as may put it again in danger of being made the Scene of War and Bloodshed. But these are not the only Evils of such a State of Dissension. For consider the Consequences of it, either to the Religious, Moral, or Political Condition of any Nation or Community, how destructive they must needs be. It not only gives an Interruption to the outward Exercise of Religious Worship, and the Service of God in Quiet; but the very inward and vital Principles of all true Religion are corrupted by it, and *Charity, which out of a pure Heart and a good Conscience is the very End of the Commandment*, is in a great measure destroyed, where the Unity of the Spirit is no longer kept in the Bond of Peace: But that which was designed to cement Christians in mutual Love and Affection, is drawn in to be the very Bone of Contention; while the several Pretenders to different Modes of Religion endeavour by Force, and not by Reason and Argument, to subdue each other into their own Sentiments.

Nor is the Influence upon the Practice of all Virtue and Morality less pernicious; for when Strength becomes the Law of Justice, and Right and Wrong are determined, not by the Rules of Reason and Equity, but by the Edge of the Sword: Every social Virtue is then made to give way to the present Necessity. Faith and Truth are no longer observed, than they advance the Cause of the Party espoused. And where Men are engaged in a State of

mutual

mutual Defiance, Deceit and Treachery are no longer esteemed Blemishes in a Man's Character; by which means all mutual Confidence, arising from the Exchange of former good Offices to one another, is destroyed, the very Ties of Nature and Friendship broken, and the Obligations of Humanity it self cancelled. Such a State of Confusion must necessarily be attended with a Dissolution of all good Order and Discipline in Families and private Societies; from whence will naturally spring an universal Corruption of Manners in all Ranks and Relations of Men.

And when things are come to this Crisis, there generally follows one of the greatest Evils that can befall the Political State of any Community, the Loss of Liberty and legal Government, and a being forced to submit to the arbitrary Will of the Conqueror. It was the Prospect of this, which made a wise *Roman* Statesman so much dread the breaking out of that Civil War, which he saw approaching: *Pace opus est* *, says he to his intimate Friend, *ex victoria cum multa mala tum certè tyrannus existet.* He knew the Temper of the leading Men on both Sides too well, and was too well acquainted with human Nature, to think that it could be otherwise, when the Matter was put upon that Issue, which Party soever pre-

* Cic. Epist. ad Atticum, lib. 7. Ep. 5.

vailed:

vailed: Which made him rather desire Peace upon any tolerable Terms, than to have the Case decided by the Sword, of which he had formerly seen such fatal Consequences. When the just and ancient Constitution of any State is once torn in pieces, and the Laws which cemented it are dissolved, the boldest Adventurer for Power, and he that has the fewest Restraints, either of Honour or Conscience, will be most likely to give Law to the rest; and it will be very difficult to assert any Claim of Right and Property against him, that has Power enough to seize the sovereign Disposal of every thing. This was the unhappy Case of this Kingdom upon the Dissolution of our ancient Government. When the legal Head of the Community was cut off, he that for some time covertly, and then openly usurp'd the Power of a Dictator, thought himself under no Restraint from using all the other constituent Parts of it as he pleased: So pernicious are the Consequences of civil Confusion both to Religion, Morality, and good Policy. Foreign Wars sometimes unite a State, and by that Means preserve it from Ruin; but intestine Feuds naturally end in its Destruction. Truth it self has told us, that *a Kingdom divided against it self is brought to desolation.*

I should not have said so much upon a Point, of which the World has had so many Proofs from Experience; if it were not that

Men

Men are so apt to neglect the Consideration of future Consequences, when their Passions are once engaged, that they can hardly ever be too much cautioned against them beforehand.

II. The next Observation, and that which the Text more immediately points at, is this; That how great and pernicious to Society soever these Evils of War and Fighting are; they naturally proceed from the ungoverned Lusts and Passions of Men. When Men's unruly Appetites, either after Riches, or Honour, or Pleasure, the three great Incentives of Men's irregular Desires, are so far indulg'd as to settle into Habits of Covetousness, Pride, or Luxury; they naturally produce such vicious Fruits, as are of themselves destructive to the Peace and Happiness of every Society where they prevail: And therefore, when St. *Paul* speaks of *perilous times*, which should *come in the last days*, he does not describe those Perils by any approaching Calamities of Famine, or Pestilence, or Inundations; but by the prevailing Vices of those Times. *For men* (says he) *shall be lovers of their own selves; covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers*, or railers; *disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy; without natural affection; truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce*, or cruel; *despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lo-*

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vers of God: And yet, with all these wicked Dispositions, *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.* These are the Fruits and Effects of Men's *lusts*, *which war in their members*; and how inconsistent these are with the Peace and Happiness of Society, and, on the contrary, how dangerous Symptoms they are of Ruin and Confusion, may be very easily discern'd, by observing the plain natural Tendency of them.

For to instance in Self-love, which is put by the Apostle in the Front of all these vicious Dispositions, and which is in a great measure the very Root and Foundation of all the rest, as it exerts it self in those several Shapes; What Good can be hoped for, or what Evil may not be apprehended, where Men are generally acted by so base and unsociable a Principle? For how is it possible there should be any true Pursuit of publick Good, where Mens Hearts are set only upon their own vile and unworthy Self-interest? Can any just and equal Liberty ever thrive, where Men have no other View, but to set themselves up by pulling others down? All Right is perverted, and all Order confounded, to compass so pernicious an End. He that makes himself alone the Centre to which all his Actions and all his Endeavours tend, can never be either a good Patriot, or a faithful Subject. Neither the just Prerogative of the Prince, nor the just Liberty and Property of the People, can be

be safe in such Hands. For he will make the same Arguments serve for or against either by turns, as they happen to suit his present Purposes. As it is observed by a Noble * Historian; that *the same Principles, and the same Application of those Principles, were used to the wresting of all Sovereign Power from the Crown; which the Crown had a little before made use of for the extending its Authority beyond its Bounds, to the Prejudice of the just Rights of the Subject.*——And he observes likewise, that *many of those who were the principal Makers of the first Pit, were likewise the chief Diggers of the second Ditch.* When such a Man's Passion draws him towards the Love of Money, it will put him upon Rapine and Oppression, and an utter Disregard to all Rules of Justice and Equity. The Right or Wrong of any Cause he happens to be engaged in, is not the thing that enters into such a Man's Consideration, but how far it will advance his own Fortune; nor will he assist the best Cause in the World longer than he can gain by it. If the same Self-love break out into Ambition, and an Appetite for Power, it will make him insolent and imperious if he succeed, turbulent and seditious if he be disappointed. Every Degree of Pride and Arrogance, from which Self-love can never

* *Clarendon's* Hist. Book 5.

be separated, has in it something destructive to the Peace of Society; insomuch that the Wise Man seems to lay the Breach of it solely to this Cause, *Only by Pride cometh Contention.* As Men of this Spirit overvalue themselves, and despise all others; so no Man's Interest seems of any Concern to them but their own. Hence they treat others with Contempt and Cruelty, and whoever opposes them is sure to be made the Object of their Hatred and Revenge. Hence they grow implacable and unmerciful, not only to particular Persons, who may seem to stand in their way, but even to all that have any Relation to such, to their whole Party, Order or Profession; as *Haman scorned to lay hands on Mordecai alone*, but determined to destroy the whole *Jewish* People with him. Such savage Passions are never satisfied, but by the Ruin of all that oppose them.

And though inordinate Self-love, and all these unruly Passions which accompany it, are directly contrary to the true Nature of the Christian Religion, and to all the Maxims of the Gospel; yet they often find Opportunity to disguise themselves under a Mask of Religion, which serves to kindle a furious and intemperate Zeal in weak and superstitious People, and thereby to draw in more Partisans to assist them, under pretence of advancing the Cause of God. This is the Case of the Zealots of all Parties. And from

from such bitter and contentious Zeal proceeds *Confusion, and every evil Work.*

These angry Passions, which I have touched upon, appear most immediately to affect the Peace of every Society where they rise to any height; but there are others, which though they seem more remote, yet in their Consequences do as certainly tend to destroy the publick Weal of every People where they prevail; I mean, those brutish Lusts and Passions, which are chiefly excited by sensual Pleasures, which break out in Riot and Excess, Uncleanness and Intemperance, Luxury and Prodigality. St. *James* mentions it as one great Ground of Mens quarreling and killing one another, and desiring to have the things of this World, which they could not obtain from God by Prayer, because they ask'd amiss, that they might *consume them upon their lusts:* So that the former Passions are called in to assist these in attaining their End. They that please may call these *private Vices*, but it will not be easy to induce any sober and considerate Man to esteem them *publick Benefits.* They are indeed oftentimes the unhappy Product of Riches, Peace and Prosperity in a Nation; that is, they arise from the Abuse of easy and plentiful Circumstances; but they never are the Parents of Riches, Peace or Plenty to any Nation. 'Tis Diligence, Industry, Frugality, Temperance, and the like Virtues, that increase the Wealth and Strength

of it. Plain Reaſon will ſhew us, that all Perſons abandoned to Luxury and Exceſs, to Idleneſs and Intemperance, are at the beſt but ſo many Members rendred uſeleſs, and incapable of doing any true Service to the Commonwealth, either in Counſel or Action. But this is not the worſt; for if by theſe expenſive Vices they ruin their own Eſtates, as it often happens, then are they eaſily tempted into any unjuſt Meaſures of ſupporting their Extravagance out of the Eſtates of other Men, and even of embroiling the Publick, that in a Time of Confuſion they may have ſome Opportunity to repair their broken Fortunes by preying upon their Neighbours. Other Mens Rights and Liberties will be but very ill preſerved by ſuch as uſe their own only to Licentiouſneſs. And the Experience of all Ages and Countries confirms this Reaſon of Things, ſince the Ruin of every State has conſtantly followed upon the general Prevalency of theſe Vices. And it is a juſt Judgment of God, upon a general Corruption of Manners in any Nation, not to hinder it from reaping the Fruits of its own Wickedneſs.

From what has been hitherto ſaid, it will be very natural to obſerve,

III. That the true Foundation of all publick Happineſs and Tranquillity is moſt ſurely laid in every Man's curbing his own unruly

Luſts

Lusts and Passions. Men are generally very desirous to restrain the Passions of other Men, and sometimes by letting loose upon them more violent Passions of their own. But this is not the way to procure any equitable Peace between them, but only such Peace as a *British* Prince is said once to have taxed the *Romans* for making in this Island, by destroying all that opposed them. But the best and most effectual Way of preserving the Peace of any Community, is for every Member of it to begin with himself, in mortifying all his own exorbitant Desires: This will not only make him judge more impartially what is fit to be corrected in other Mens Conduct, but will also make his Judgment have the more Weight upon others in persuading them to Reason. Some Men may perhaps think this a very slow and tedious way of preserving the Peace, and curing the Evils of a divided Nation, they would rather have some more quick and powerful Remedy prescribed; but I dare venture to say, that if all such Men would but in earnest set themselves to try this Method, they would soon see the happy Effect of it; and would find the Passions of other Men abate, in some proportion at least, as themselves improve in correcting their own. Some critical Cases may perhaps require some other more speedy Application, which it is not my Province to direct; but unless this

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also be constantly used, though the Symptoms may be a little abated, the Cure will never be perfect.

I am not here called to propose any Political Schemes of Advice to any Party or Order of Men, with relation to the Management of Publick Affairs: For I am sensible, it was not one of the least Evils of those unhappy Times of Distraction, which this Day brings to our Memory, that the Pulpit was made the Means of exasperating, rather than curing the Distempers which then raged: But I may be allow'd to press upon all Ranks of Men, as a Christian Duty which they all owe to the Publick, as well as to their own Happiness, To beware of indulging any of those sinful Passions, which have so fatal an Influence upon both. And therefore give me leave, earnestly to exhort all that hear me, to make this Use of this Day's Humiliation, not to provoke one another's Passions, by reproaching each other for those Evils which befel our Forefathers; or to be perpetually fighting those Battels over again, which had then so terrible Effects upon our Constitution both in Church and State; but to take warning by those Days of Calamity, *not to bite and devour one another, lest we be consumed one of another*, as they were; and to fix in our Minds a serious Resolution, never to suffer our selves to be blinded by Self-Interest, Ambition, Revenge, or any

any other unruly Passion, or partial Affection: For he that once gives himself up to these Guides, can never be sure how far they will hurry him. It is a dangerous Thing to give way even to the first Sallies of our Passions towards publick Discord in a State; for *the beginning of strife is, as when one letteth out water*, as the wise Man observes; who thereupon advises us, that we should *leave off contention, before it be meddled with.*

To conclude. Let our Reflection upon those Evils which attended the fatal Tragedy of this Day, teach us truly to value our present Happiness in the Enjoyment of such a Just and Equitable Constitution of Government, as all our Neighbours envy, but few of them understand. A Constitution, which our Forefathers, by the sad Experience of being deprived of it for many Years, were taught to value far above all those various Forms, which they were forced to submit to in their Turns, after they had lost this. Let us learn so much Wisdom at their Expence, as not to meddle with those who are given to change. Let us neither meditate any New Models of Government, nor give any Encouragement to such as endeavour to overturn our present Happy Establishment. But let our Duty and Loyalty to our Gracious Sovereign, who now happily reigns over us,

ty, exert it self in a chearful Obedience to his Authority; that neither our sinful Passions, nor private Interests, may disappoint his Care for the Publick Good; but that we may all unite in defending both His and the Kingdom's just Rights, against all such as may seek to invade them. And, in short, let all that pretend to be true Lovers of their Country, behave themselves according to St. Peter's Direction, *as free, but not using their liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.* Let them *honour all Men; love the Brotherhood; fear* GOD, *honour the* KING.

F I N I S.
